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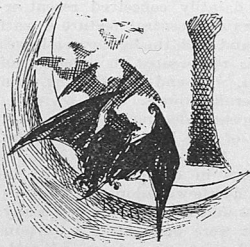
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WILD IRIS AND BULLRUSH, BY HARRY A. DEANE.

FLOWERS IN DECORATION.



N seeking chiefly simplicity and natural effects in floral arrangements, the best designers are greatly enhancing the charm of this adornment. The force of a rule regarding flowers to "bring them in just as nature makes them," becomes somewhat predominant in the finest order of decoration from natural sources.

Instead of stripping flowers from branches to manufacture monograms, a system of wholly different basis is adopted. The most recent arrangements tend indeed to a similitude with those of antiquity as treasuries of fragrant production become replete.

Our metropolitan highways are of fascinating distinction with their show of floral profusion. A natural glory of the West is superbly typified in this manner, as was that of the Nile valley in old Thebes and Alexandria.

As the flowers of Egypt served finer uses than in forming Ptolemaic monograms, devices of this order are with other evolutions, happily banished from present decoration as if to return no more. Apparently fancy is on the wing for a circuit of the floral ages.

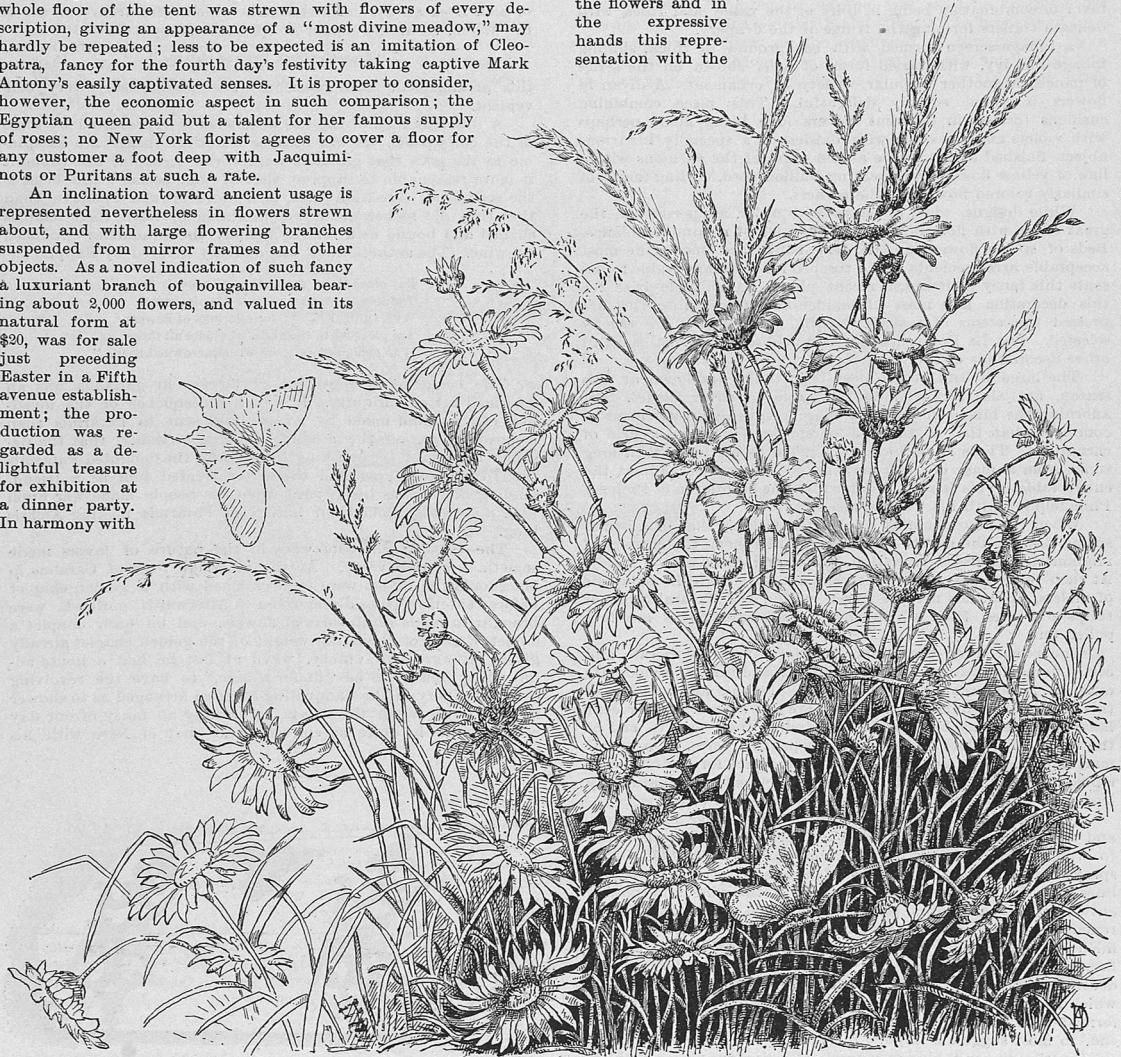
The spectacle provided by Ptolemy Philadelphus, when the whole floor of the tent was strewn with flowers of every description, giving an appearance of a "most divine meadow," may hardly be repeated; less to be expected is an imitation of Cleopatra, fancy for the fourth day's festivity taking captive Mark Antony's easily captivated senses. It is proper to consider, however, the economic aspect in such comparison; the Egyptian queen paid but a talent for her famous supply of roses; no New York florist agrees to cover a floor for any customer a foot deep with Jacquimints or Puritans at such a rate.

An inclination toward ancient usage is represented nevertheless in flowers strewn about, and with large flowering branches suspended from mirror frames and other objects. As a novel indication of such fancy a luxuriant branch of bougainvillea bearing about 2,000 flowers, and valued in its natural form at \$20, was for sale just preceding Easter in a Fifth avenue establishment; the production was regarded as a delightful treasure for exhibition at a dinner party. In harmony with

the advancing idea of naturalness, a pretty scene was presented in some of the Sunday schools, when each child entering the Easter assemblage carried in the hand a lily. More recently, also, a pleasing representation of similar character was a feature of a celebration at All Soul's church.

The festival commemorated the tenth anniversary of the free kindergarten established by the church, with honors to the memory of Froebel as founder of the system. As the folding doors were rolled back at the rear of the large exhibition room, a procession of children advanced, each clasping in the arms a large flower-pot, with which the company made repeated circuits before being seated. At a special stage of the exercises, after the recital in song of the sad story of "The Little White Lily," and the singing of an anthem, the juvenile band marched to the platform to contribute their floral offerings to the name and honor of the founder of the kindergarten. After the exercises were concluded the children were laden with the offerings left on the platform, which they carried to sick little ones of the parish. Nothing is more desirable than this aspect of the matter, with children trained to regard most the beauties of nature in purely natural conditions.

A degree of novel reflection from a definitely changed idea connected with flowers appears in paintings of floral subjects. In one of the present Academy pictures a most pleasant natural effect is gained with a ledge and wall introduced in order to provide a situation for some beautifully painted roses. Another example, not strictly a novelty in conception, represents a mass of fine roses gathered in two uplifted hands seen at one side of the canvas. Both in the sweetness of the flowers and in the expressive hands this representation with the



AMONG THE DAISIES, BY HARRY A. DEANE.

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

subject of "Italian Roses—Love's Offering," is of such charm as vastly to influence favor for the invisible lover.

The recent view regarding flowers is expressed with full significance in the great paintings of floral character has been shown in the exhibition of the Society of American Artists and in the Academy, where the highly decorative work by Mr. Louis C. Tiffany, valued at \$3,500, but lately adorn the corridor. Here a procession, including figures of children, move within a delicious atmosphere through the middle distance. The foreground is filled with the brightness of tulips and other spring flowers in a rush of tender early bloom. Beyond the line of figures are fruit trees with delicately flowering branches hanging overhead. Such are the representations of flower painters, echoing the latest development of taste.

The decorators in their department meet a demand for "gardenesque effects," which also is skillfully answered. In some cases a corridor is transformed into a vine-bordered lane, the walls being covered on either side with wires supporting trailing forms of foliage. Smilax, Japanese fern and other varieties of climbers, are used for such upholstery and in varied draperies of ornamental designs.

In case of elaborate floral decorations, plans are drawn and estimates given as for architectural work. For the wedding and for the golden wedding the expenditure is liberal if not lavish.

Among other designs for the drawing-room wedding is the floral net formed with light vines and flowers, and so arranged as to be drawn up with the effect of a canopy. An admired feature of adornment is in the form of a curtain with foundation in long, light strings of wire. The covering may be varied, a favorite combination being in lilies of the valley and roses, with delicate trailers forming the fringe of the drapery.

A foliage screen formed with background in thick, shining foliage like ivy, with varied forms of relief shown on the series of panels, is another popular variety of ornament. A divan in flowers is found equally delightful. This piece combining cushions formed in different flowers (one being made perhaps with violets and the other with daisies), is a specially luxurious object, finished as it may be at the edges of the cushions with a line of yellow flowers, representing bullion cord, uniting tassels of similarly colored flowers at the corners.

While designs, when of picturesque order, are permitted, the great effort with flowers is in the direction of natural semblance. Beds of spring flowers and flowery banks are among the most acceptable arrangements. The rosebed for the dinner-table represents this fancy in its most recent phase. A suitable base for this decoration is a mass of maiden-hair ferns; into this are pressed the stems of tea and hybrid roses, which are chiefly selected. The La France variety is much sought for this as in other decorations of the finest style.

The large hybrid roses, most beautifully developed at this season, are also arranged on the table in silver dishes. For adorning the luncheon table no more exquisite arrangement is conceived than that of the bed of spring flowers or a field of carnations. These flowers are so disposed as to rise on their long stems from a mass of their own grassy foliage over almost the entire table. This is rather better than the decoration of Ptolemy Philadelphus with his "divine meadow."

When the adornment of a luncheon table is that of a bed of spring flowers, the guests take away with them the clusters of mignonette, narcissus, carnation, tulips and lilies of the valley. At such repasts also boxes of cream are fitted within bouquets of violets, or creams may be frozen within the natural forms of tulips and roses, from which the stamens and pistils are first pulled out.

The occasion of the dinner develops more elaborate and costly floral decoration, for which the expenditure, at a moderate estimate, is represented by four figures. For an arrangement of this character orchids and fine roses are not spared. As a recent fancy a brook may be represented winding from end to end of the table with plate glass cut in serpentine form. On either margin are massed ferns and other appropriate forms of foliage, among which are combined lilies and tulips reflected charmingly from below in all the natural grace and effect of color.

The butterfly orchid is selected for trailing over candelabra, and being greatly admired in this use for a fancied resemblance to winged bright forms in vibration about the lights. Other sprays may be attached to vines of asparagus laid in irregular lines over the table, and connected with the vine and flowers entwining the candelabra placed at one end. According to the remaining decorations fireplaces are either massed with ferns, or filled in with golden evergreens, or with foliage combining red berries or flowers. A pyramid of roses is one of the popular decorative forms. It is made with a foundation of moss, into which are pushed the stems of the flowers. Banks of flowers formed with mantels and mirror bases, are inclined from end to end, to most suggest a flowery hillside.

For the dinner table are mounds of asparagus vine, on which are laid the flowers of the showy cattleyas, producing a brilliant effect with the foliage retaining the drops of water with which

it is showered. One of the most daintily conceived recent arrangements which is reported shows as a central feature a scarf of lilies of the valley edged all around with the light green leaves of this variety. Another fancy is represented in a mound of Japanese snowballs and hydrangeas, with end pieces in the form of plateaus of selaginellas and mahernia flowers.

The colors most selected in present decoration are yellow, pink and white, in continuation of the idea predominant at Easter.

Many of the curious distinctions in qualities observed in ancient times are not recognized. Myrtle was adopted for crowns on account of its exciting properties and because it represses any rising of the fumes of wine. Roses were believed to a certain extent to relieve headache and to impart some degree of coolness. Garlands of white lilies, of amaranthus, or of any other flower or herb tending to produce heaviness or torpid feelings in the head were avoided. If Anacreon was rightly informed a garland of myrtle was worn with one of roses—one acting as a check upon the fumes of wine, and the other serving as a remedy for headache, in addition to its cooling qualities.

The myrtle of Egypt was sweeter, according to Theophrastus, than that found in any other country. One of the old writers says that first of all, using garlands as ligatures, men took those of ivy, which was very plentiful and grew everywhere, and was not only pleasant to look upon with its green leaves and bunches of berries, but bearing a good deal of tension so as to admit of being bound tight across the brow, and imparting a certain degree of coolness without any stupefying smell accompanying it. This garland was considered sacred to Bacchus, implying that the inventor of wine is also the defender of men from all the inconveniences which arise from the use of it. When, as at the supper of Iphicrates, they had

"Brazen goblets large as cisterns,"

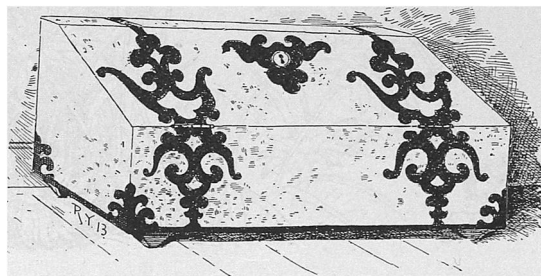
this arrangement with Bacchus was undoubtedly very convenient.

A different idea of the use of flowers is represented by some of the early poets. It was because beautiful things are acceptable to the gods that garlands were worn. Aristobol also thought it more reasonable to suppose that it was because the head is the seat of all sensation that men wore crowns upon it, than that they did so because it was desirable to have their temples shaded and bound as a remedy against the headaches produced by wine. The æsthetic idea was distinctly favored by Sappho:

"But place those garlands on thy lovely hair,
Twining the tender sprouts of anise green
With skillful hand; for offerings of flowers
Are pleasing to the gods, who hate all those
Who come before them with uncrowned heads."

The beautiful arrangement of flowers in garlands was an esteemed art of antiquity. It was in consequence of the loveliness of a garland made by Amasis and sent to Patarmis, then king of Egypt, on the celebration of a birthday, that the designer afterward became king himself, for the delighted Patarmis invited him to supper and thereafter treated him as a friend, sending him out as his general when the people made war upon him, and finally from their hatred of Patarmis making Amasis king.

The Grecian chaplets were in the nature of favors made sometimes of rich value. At the marriage feast of Caranus in Macedonia the guests were each crowned with a golden chaplet before entering the dining-room. Afterwards garlands were brought in made of all sorts of flowers, and on each chaplet a circlet of gold of about the weight of the golden chaplet already given. It was Nero's fancy, when at last he had a house admitted by himself to be "fit for a man," to have the revolving ceiling in ivory of the banqueting-room so arranged as to shower flowers down upon the guests. Certainly no fancy of our day with flowers is quite as enlivening as that of Nero with his novelty.



DESIGN FOR CHEST, BY R. Y. BARROWS.